

VISITS FROM NATHAN

BY MELANIE KENNY

When I was 12, I felt invincible, but my carefree life came to a screeching halt when I was diagnosed with spinal meningitis. Back then I had no idea what spinal meningitis was or how it would cripple my life; all I knew was that I was in the worst pain I had ever experienced. For a whole week I stayed curled up in a ball with an excruciating headache. The pain was so debilitating that I couldn't see or even walk straight.

I was given a blessing that told me the Lord was watching out for me, He had a plan for me, and I just needed to trust Him. I kept going because I knew the Lord was testing my

faith. But eight months later I still wasn't able to get out of bed. One day, as I was struggling to just make it to the bathroom, I concluded that I was never going to be able to be a normal kid again. I fell into a deep depression; I felt that my life meant nothing.



MOVIE NIGHT

BY SARAH SWICK



One day while I was sitting on the couch feeling miserable and day-dreaming about what life could have been like, my mom brought in my friend Nathan. When he saw me for the first time, he was shocked. Before, I had always been well-groomed, but now my eyes were dead and seemed to blend right in with my pale skin, my hair looked like a bird's nest, and I was weak. My voice was almost too soft to hear.

After a few failed attempts at conversation, we gave up. I was just too exhausted within only a few minutes, and it was hard to concentrate on him and what he was saying. Finally, with nothing more to say, he left. Even though this had been extremely hard on me, I was strangely uplifted. Nathan's visit had cheered me up, and it felt good to know that someone was actually thinking of me.

When he left, I was pretty sure he wouldn't come back. To my surprise, though, he came the next week, and then the next. With each visit I felt a little bit of joy added back into my life. Soon Nathan brought over his friend, and we all laughed and talked together. Amazingly, I began to get up every day and have enough energy to accomplish things.

When I was going through the most difficult moments of this illness, the Lord sent me help. Nathan's initial visit was painful, and I hated every minute of it, but it was what I needed most. Before his visit I was miserable and was giving in to depression, but the kindness of a friend saved me. **NE**

It was Saturday night, and we were bored, so my brother and I decided to go pick up a movie. As I was browsing through an aisle in the electronics department, my brother pointed to a movie and told me his friend had really liked it. I read the description on both the back and front covers. It looked innocent enough, so I told him to go ahead and purchase it.

When we came home with the movie, I opened the case and went to turn the movie on. As I did, I picked up the case, turned it over, and was shocked to find—as I had failed to notice at the store—that the movie was rated R. My mother came in a few seconds later to call us together for family prayer.

During the prayer, my mind was racked with the decision of watching the movie or putting it away. My brother had just spent all this money on the movie, and I had already opened the case, thus eliminating the

possibility of returning it! Why hadn't I checked the rating? I couldn't possibly tell him he had just wasted his money and I was not going to watch the movie. Maybe I could watch it once and never again.

Suddenly, I was reminded of an upcoming youth temple trip. I knew what I needed to do—keep the standards and be worthy to attend the temple. I could not willingly disobey the words of the prophets. I told my mom and brother of my dilemma and surprisingly, my brother said it was fine to get rid of the movie and would not ask me to pay him back for it. I am glad I made the right choice, and I am thankful that I upheld the Lord's standards. **NE**

HE LIVES

BY CAMILLE SHOSTED

I had the opportunity to sing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (*Hymns*, no. 136) at the General Young Women's Meeting in March 2000. As we practiced this hymn, it began to take on a different meaning to me, and the words have touched my life.

The beginning of the hymn says, "He lives, who once was dead." That

is a powerful statement because so many people don't believe in Christ's Resurrection. I feel so blessed because I do. The hymn goes on to say, "He lives to wipe away my tears." It doesn't say He will take them away, but to me it means He will stand by us, listen, and comfort us in our times of need.

There is power and strength in the words of this hymn. It has strengthened my testimony. I know that Jesus Christ lives and loves us and that He will always help us. **NE**

AN HONEST GRADE

NAME WITHHELD

It was a big assignment, and I had received an A+. My teacher explained that this assignment had the power to change our overall grade in the class. At the time, I had no worries. After all, I had passed with flying colors.

However, when my teacher told us that six students had received zeros on the assignment for plagiarizing, my sense of ease melted away. Not only had I plagiarized, but I had also received a perfect score for it.

At first my guilt was small. But then I read Doctrine and Covenants 1:31 and 3:10, and I felt the pain sink deeper and deeper: “For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. . . . But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the command-

ment which I gave you.”

It was then that I felt the utmost shame for my sin, but I rejoiced over the fact that I could repent. I promised myself that I would e-mail my teacher the very next day.

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But I didn't. I thought that repentance could wait in my busy life. I put off e-mailing my teacher for three days. Satan worked hard on me for those three days, telling me that my grade was more important. I almost gave in to the temptation, but I prayed to the Lord for courage.

I finally sent the e-mail. My teacher replied and emphasized that honesty is more important than my grade and that I had wonderful parents who taught me what is right. She also said she would change my grade.

As I read the e-mail, I cried. Not for my grade, but because I had earned my teacher's trust. By being honest, I know that I will also gain the trust of my Heavenly Father. **NE**